

GOD'S CURE FOR MAN'S WEAKNESS

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*“Out of weakness were made strong.”
Hebrews 11:34.*

SOME kinds of weakness are of God's appointment and necessarily incident to manhood; they are not sinful, and therefore we may continue to be subject to them without regret. In reference to such weaknesses it may be that after beseeching the Lord even thrice to remove them, it may be for our good that they should remain, for then will our gracious God give us in place of removing the weakness, this reply “My grace shall be sufficient for you.” This is a case of our weakness being made strong, and there are many of God's saints who daily experience so blessed a privilege; they are weak, and continue weak; they have infirmities which they once wished to have removed, but which now they are content to bear, for now they are of the same mind with the apostle—they glory in their infirmity because when they are weak they are strong. But, dear friends, there is another kind of weakness which *is* sinful; a weakness which springs not from nature, but from *fallen* nature; not from God's appointment, but from our sinfulness, and out of this we should desire to be delivered. We cannot pray for strength in sinful weakness, but must earnestly plead for strength to come out of it and to be made strong. This seems to me to be the particular blessing which faith is said to have obtained in the text “out of weakness were made strong.” It is the inestimable privilege of many a Christian to be strong in weakness when the weakness is only one of infirmity, but it is an equally precious gift to be made strong out of weakness when that weakness is of a sinful kind. Looking round the church at large, with as impartial an eye as we can summon, we are afraid that for the most part it is nowadays comparable to a huge infirmary rather than a camp filled with brave soldiers.

Both ministers and private members of the church are very generally weak in one way or other. They are living, but they are sickly; they are working for God, but they are working in a feeble, inefficient manner. If I look upon the camps of the Lord's enemies, whether Puseyite or Broad church, I see intelligence and vigor so apparent that I am apt to think that never was error more earnest, more active, and more intense than just now. There is a reality about the efforts of our opponents which may well alarm us, and when I look to the camp of the Lord Jesus Christ I lament a predominant lukewarmness, a want of enthusiasm and deficiency in force, which, if it does not betoken a departure from God in heart, certainly indicates very great feebleness in the vital parts—producing comparative weakness in all the parts. I desire this morning to speak to those who are weak; weak where they ought not to be, and who feel a growing tendency to rest content in that weakness. I would stir up those who are beginning to imagine that weakness is the normal and proper state of a Christian, that to be unbelieving, desponding, nervous, timid, cowardly, inactive, heartless, is at worst a very excusable thing. I want, if God wills, to show to the sinfully weak ones that their condition is not proper at all; I want to show that it is a work of faith to lift us out of it; not to help us in our evil weakness, but to deliver us out of it and to make us strong, reversing our present condition by enabling us to be mighty in the work of God. Since the text teaches that faith is the grand cure for spiritual feebleness, I shall, first, *cite a few cases of cure*; in the second place *I shall analyze the remedy*; in the third place *I shall endeavor to administer it*, and in the fourth place *I shall say a word of praise to the Physician who prescribes it*.

I. At the outset we have said that faith is the cure for spiritual weakness, and I have to MENTION CASES OF CURE.

I shall not now cite cases from the Old Testament of bodily cures which have been worked by faith, though I might mention Hezekiah, who being sick unto death was by faith in God's promise, restored to life and his period of existence lengthened 15 years. In the apostolic times it was through faith that many sicknesses were made to fly before the healing touch of the apostles. That power of healing has probably become extinct, or is lying dormant in the church, yet there are still indications that faith has some power in that direction. I cannot but think that when honest John Wickliffe, raising himself up in the bed of sickness, said to the monks who surrounded him, expecting him to die and tempting him to recant, "I shall not die, but live to declare the wicked deeds of the monks"—I cannot but think that his faith had much to do with his cure; had he been a man of a timorous, wavering frame of mind, his sickbed might have been his deathbed, but the vital forces were all thrown into energetic action by the mental energy of his faith, and the crisis was safely passed. I do not know how far faith may still operate upon the bodily frame, for there is certainly an intimate connection between the soul and the body. Those wondrous cases recorded in the life of Dorothea Trudel of Zurich indicate the singular power of faith to assist in the cure of the body by its calming influence on the mind. That admirable woman, who has but just departed this life, became the founder of a hospital in which cures were worked mainly by the means of prayer and faith—cures which have been substantiated in the best possible manner, namely, by her enemies having dragged her before the law courts of Zurich for practicing medicine without a diploma, when she proved that the only medicine used was directing the mind to Christ, and proclaiming the gospel, by which a holy calm spread over the mind and the body derived manifest benefit. Such cases, and others which we have noticed, go to show that if we had more faith in the living God it might sometimes be possible for the soul to so overmaster the body that out of weakness we might still, in Hezekiah's fashion, be made strong. These hints are not, however, to the point, and relate rather to a theory than to the revealed truth of God.

That faith strengthens Christians has been proved often in *the history of the church of God*. The church's weakness springs mainly and mostly from a lack of faith in her God, and in the revelation which God has entrusted to her. When men believe intensely they act vigorously, and when their principles penetrate their very souls, and become precious to them as life itself, then no suffering is too severe, no undertaking is too laborious, and no conflict too heroic. They will enter upon impossibilities, laugh at them, and overcome them, when once they know of a surety that the principles which move them are most certainly from God. This seems to me to be the great work which Luther did in his day under God the Holy Spirit's power. He brought back the church to the strength of faith, and then her whole force returned. The man knew very little of the truth of God, but upon the doctrine of justification by faith he was clear as the sun at noonday, but he was half a Romanist in most other respects. But this one all-important thing he did for the church—he made her believe in God and in God's truth with a vigorous decision which had almost ceased from among men.

Though he knew not all the weapons of the divine armory, yet the one he did know he wielded with such bravery of faith, and such tremendous dogmatism that his resolute soul shamed others into steadfastness. See the man as he goes into Worms, defying a host of devils, though they were as many as the tiles on the roofs of the houses. See him standing up in the Diet of Worms and alleging that he could not retract, so help him God! See him in his earlier days, nailing up his theses upon the church doors as sailors nail their colors to the mast, or tearing the Pope's bull in pieces, and casting it into the fire! As men resolved on conquest break down the bridges behind them, and render retreat impossible, it was the man's faith in God that helped him to do great exploits, and the church learned from him to believe that "God everywhere has sway, and all things serve His might." When the church once more believed firmly, her spirit returned to her, and like a giant refreshed with new wine, she recommenced her race.

In the modern revival under Whitefield and Wesley the restoration of faith was the source of restored strength. Those brothers, differing in doctrine as they did, had this point in common, namely, that they

were intense believers in the indwelling power and presence of the Holy Spirit in the church. Men had been disputing and trying to prove or disprove everything. Sermons were frequent upon such topics as whether there was a God or not. Now you never find Whitefield or Wesley wasting time over such matters; they were so full of God's Spirit, and could see Him so clearly everywhere at work, that they felt no need of proving it. While men were discussing as to whether the Scriptures were inspired, and men were writing books upon the evidences, these men preached the gospel and infidelity fled before them. An age destitute of spiritual life generally amuses itself by trying to prove what is not worth proving, or wasting its energy upon external things to the neglect of the inward; an age spiritually alive takes itself to the Lord's work, and treats all doubt as folly and sin. The followers of Whitefield and Wesley, instead of proving with diffidence and apologizing for the gospel with half-heartedness, came forth with, "Thus and thus said the Lord." They mounted their pulpits as monarchs mount their thrones, and they proclaimed the truth of God, and men acknowledged its power till from one end of the land to the other the dry bones arose to life and stood as an exceedingly great army. Brothers and sisters, our churches must come back to the old faith, and to a firm belief in it! If you do not believe the articles of your faith, reject them and do not be sham believers. If the doctrines which you profess are indeed true, grip them, hold them fast, get them engraved upon your souls, and burnt into your consciences. Have faith in God and the truth—that the truth of God cannot be destroyed nor God defeated. Vitality and power in your faith will soon send force and life into all the other parts of your spiritual manhood.

What has been proved upon the largest scale has been true in all other instances. For instance, *the weakness of depraved human nature* always gives way before the energy of that faith which the Spirit works in us. The sinner, aroused in his weakness, sighs dolefully—

*"I would but cannot sing,
I would but cannot pray.
I would but cannot
Break the bonds of sin,
I would but cannot melt my heart
And soften it in penitence."*

When the sinner is pointed to the cross, and comes to trust himself with Jesus, viewing the blood sprinkled and the righteousness worked out, then the man can pray, can sing, can melt in penitence, or can rise up in flames of love. The inability of human nature is instrumentally removed by the energy of faith; it was through believing that you became strong; if you had continued to live by work, or by feeling, you would have been still as weak as ever, but when you looked out of self to Christ and trusted Him, it was then your strength came to you.

The same is true of *subsequent spiritual weakness*. Christians who are alive unto God, and are endowed with some divine strength, are attacked at times with a spiritual, universal decline. Just as we sometimes see a strong and healthy person growing pale and wan, losing appetite and falling into sickness, until he becomes a mere skeleton because a general sapping and undermining of the constitution has come upon him—so have I seen it with Christians; they do not lose life, but they do lose all their energy, and become as listless and lifeless as some of you probably now are in body through the heat of the air. Then they can scarcely walk, much less run, and mounting with wings as eagles is quite out of the question. Such persons will bear witness that the only way of recruiting their strength is by faith. They must come again to the first principles, and trust their souls anew with Jesus—believing over again with a novelty of energy the old doctrines of the gospel. They must go to God as to a real God in believing prayer, and then they will not long remain weak. Out of weakness faith is sure to make us strong, and the change effected in us is equal to that which we see in a man who having been long confined to his couch, at last returns to his labor showing no tokens whatever of disease.

I have still been dealing with the great principle of the text on a large scale; we will now particularize a little more. Take a few forms of weakness. Many believers who are vigorous in many respects are troubled with a hesitancy in their testimony—they cannot speak up for Jesus. Whenever they try to say a good word, nervousness, or something akin to it, restrains them. They say with Moses, "Lord, I am slow

of speech.” They hesitate, or are still. There is no cure for hesitancy in the confession of Christ equal to faith; observe Moses, he is so hesitating that God gives him Aaron to be his spokesman, but read through the history, and Moses is the better orator of the two. Aaron has a golden mouth, but by degrees the confidence that Moses feels in his commission enables him to rebuke Aaron; and when Aaron goes up to Mount Hor to sleep in the arms of God, Moses stands up, and in that last sermon he delivered, and that psalm he sung before the assembled multitude, you cannot detect the slightest trace of slowness of speech. The man overcome his weakness by faith—a holy faith gave him a holy courage—and the tongue once bound became unloosed. I advise some of you to try it. A strong dose of the essential oil of believing taken every morning and evening would enable you to tell sinners all around what a dear Savior you have found.

Another common weakness among Christians is timidity. Modesty is beautiful, but it may degenerate to cowardice. It is well to be humble, it is never well to be weakly fearful. Some are always afraid; they dare not try this, and dare not try that; and if they happen to be placed in office where they can influence others by their counsels, they are shockingly bad officers because they are always keeping the church back from victory from a fear of defeat. What is a sure cure for timidity? Faith, belief in the truth of God, in the right, in God, in invisible energy, in helps which we cannot see, and aids which we should not have dreamed of. This shakes off timidity. Take as a specimen Barak. Barak is slow to go up against the enemies of God till Deborah, the mother of Israel, says she will go with him. Women sometimes lend superior courage to men, and the weaker sex proves itself the stronger. Look at Barak; after he has once believed in the power of God, he marches to the fight and wins the victory, and commemorated in soul-stirring words by the poetess, “Awake, awake, Deborah; awake, awake, utter a song; arise, Barak, and lead your captivity captive, you son of Abinoam.” Mighty to conquer was the man who was timid to fight—when faith gave him courage, it made him triumph. Carry a vial of strong faith along with you, and a good draught thereof will drive off fainting fits. This is the true strong water, the genuine elixir, the famous cordial, the heavenly Aqua Vitae.

A frequent form of weakness is despondency which is so common in English churches as to be as much a national disorder as consumption. It is not as common among you as it was, but still more so than I could wish; we are not so joyful and frivolous as our Galician neighbors, and we are not quite so go-ahead as our trans-Atlantic friends. I am afraid as Englishmen we have a natural tendency to become despondent; I know I feel it myself, and in the circle where I move it is not at all uncommon. Brothers and sisters, despondency is not a virtue, I believe it is a vice—I am heartily ashamed of myself for falling into it—and I am sure there is no remedy for it like a holy faith in God. Asaph, of old, was very subject to this weakness, and he said to himself, “Why are you cast down, O my soul, why are you disquieted within me?” But what was the medicine he took? “Hope in God, for I shall yet praise Him for the help of His countenance.” That was the remedy, and David prescribes it too, when he says, “Trust in Him at all times, you people; pour out your hearts before Him.” Despondency hamstring a man, it makes him weak in the arena of conflict when he ought to be like a well-trained athlete struggling with his foe, and contending for the mastery. Christian, beseech your Lord to increase your faith in Him, your trust in the unseen, your reliance upon His promise and fidelity, for when you get more faith, you will rise superior to that weakness, and out of the weakness you will be made strong.

Impatience too, *impatient murmuring*, is another form of Christian weakness in which we must not expect to be made strong in divine grace, but must plead for grace to get out of it. It strikes me that Job may naturally have been an impatient man. He utters many very tart and snappish things to his friends, not one whit sharper than they deserved, but he held fast to his integrity as if he had been a very Pharisee at first. But notice how strong he was and how clear of his weakness, when by divine grace, he could say, “Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him”! There was the medicine, you see, trusting in God. Job, full of faith, sitting on a dunghill, is a far more splendid sight than the Great Mogul upon his throne. I do not believe heaven and earth ever saw a more majestic spectacle than the patriarch on the dunghill covered with boils, scraping himself with a potsherd, and yet saying, “Shall I receive good from the

hands of the Lord, and not receive evil?" Princes, potentates and kings, your power never reached to this, and even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed so gloriously as poor Job. Brothers and sisters, if we had more faith in God that He makes all things work together for good to them who love Him, we would not grow so impatient; we would bear the pain, the cross, and the loss with greater equanimity, feeling, "My Father sent it; my Father overrules it; good will come of it."

Perhaps you are weary of this list of weaknesses, but I must add one more, namely, weakness in overcoming *besetting sins*. I hope we are not among those who make light of sin. A genuine Christian dreads sin; he will not say, "Is it not a little one?" for he knows that a little sin is like a small dose of a very potent poison—it is sufficient to destroy our peace and comfort. There are some sins which really seem as if we could not get the mastery over them. I will name one—a *passionate disposition*. A person who is of quick temper may get into the condition of thinking, "Well, I was born so, and cannot help it; I always shall be of a quick temper." You always will be if you think that, but it strikes me that the grace of God must have power to overcome evil tempers, and that your hope will be in believing that yours can be overcome, and in struggling to mortify this among the other affections of the flesh. I know personally men who were once very passionate, but are now gentle; they were once likely to take fire as readily as tinder to a spark, but now they would stand fire right well; and if I had to select patient men, I would select those very men who were notorious for their fearful tempers in years gone by. "Well, my dear friend," you will say, "I cannot do it, sir." No, I know you cannot, but there is one who can, the eternal God who is your helper can surely help to make you a reasonable being, and rid you of this madness, for anger is temporary insanity. Surely God can make you morally sane, and bring you back to a calm state of mind; only believe in His power, and seek to be wholly sanctified by His grace—spirit, soul, and body—and you will see that as He cast a legion of devils out of a man in days gone by, He can now cast this devil out of you so that you will not be pestered with it any longer. You may have to watch it as a householder watches a thief, but you will get it out of doors and keep it at arm's length. Oh for divine grace to get our temper under foot, and keep it there, that though it may have a tendency to rise we may keep it down. Anyway, whatever may be our besetting sin, and we all have something against which we ought to strive, there have been cases in which such weaknesses have been cured by faith. We have not time to stop to mention any modern instances, but we know many. I trust some of us could cite our own history as an instance of what faith in God can do. "Out of weakness they were made strong."

II. We will turn to our second head and ANALYZE THE MEDICINE.

The subject is so very wide that I must confine myself to one instance, and shall speak of the medicine as it would be mixed and compounded for a man struggling at very dreadful odds against a gigantic system of evil. He is very weak, but through faith he becomes strong. One of the first ingredients of faith's medicine is *a sense of right*. Everybody admits that when a man is sure that right is on his side, he finds strength in that belief. Even if two men are going to court with one another, the one who knows that his case is founded upon justice enters the court with much more strength of mind than he who is conscious of several flaws in his suit, and only trusts to the blessed uncertainty of the law. There is truth in the old saying that "a good conscience is the best armor." It is not of very great use in a real battle for, unfortunately, bullets have no respect for saint or sinner, but when in the way they are pretty sure to kill anybody who stops them; but a good conscience is of the utmost value in the battle of principle. A man who cannot argue, yet knows he is right will somehow or other stand his ground. He says, "My opponent has more wit than I have; he understands logic better than I, but I know I am right." And to know you are right necessarily gives you strength. Faith is a belief in the rightness of that which God reveals, a trusting in its truth, and who does not understand that a man who believes, therefore becomes strong? A second ingredient is *heavenly authority*. Everybody knows that a man who is naturally weak will often act very bravely when he has authority to back him. Let the Christian combatant feel—as feel he will when he has faith—that he is armed with divine authority, and you will not wonder if from a dwarf he rises to a giant. "This," he says, "is not my quarrel; I believe it to be God's war—the truth of God which I maintain at such hazards is no dogma of my own invention, it is God's own offspring; God

has sent me to fight for it—God puts the words into my mouth.” A man, thus conscious that he has a mission from heaven, cannot be afraid; he must be mighty; and when a man feels, in addition to that, that God’s decree appoints him to accomplish a certain end, that God’s promise declares that he shall succeed, and that from the eternal nature of truth it cannot sustain defeat—then surely he stands like a rock in the midst of the billows, and he cannot waver, he casts all thought of fear to the winds. Mixed with this is a consciousness of *heavenly companionship* which makes the believer courageous. Many a man who would have been afraid to go to battle alone has marched along very cheerily because of the many thousands who are hurrying to the same battle. The Christian feels that he has the companionship of his God and Savior. Jesus’ name is “Emmanuel, God with us.” The best of all is God is with us. If we suffer, Jesus suffers in one of His members; if we are slandered and reproached for Jesus’ sake, it is the cross of Christ which we are carrying, and Jesus bears it with us. We hear the more than angel whisper, “Fear not, I am with you.” Come then, let us sing as we march onward—

*“If on my face for Your dear name,
Shame and reproach shall be,
I’ll hail reproach and welcome shame,
If You remember me.”*

In addition to all this, faith has *an expectation of supernatural help*. Faith hears the wheels of providence working on her behalf. Mohammed, in his earlier career, though his faith was but mere fanaticism, yet gave great courage to his men by the daring things which he said and did; as he threw the handful of dust into the air, he believed that his foes were blinded, and his soldiers won an easy victory; he declared that he heard the noise of angels’ horses as they came to the fight, and no sooner had he thus spoken than every man grew brave. Now the Christian, not in imagination, but in spiritual fact, can hear the wings of angels flying to the rescue of divine truth. Here I see today the hand of a man, but I see also with it the wing of an angel. God works for His people; the evil He hinders and restricts, the good He speeds and multiplies, and, therefore, strong in invisible succors, we must not wonder that out of weakness the believer is made strong. I must not omit one powerful ingredient in faith’s life-draught, it is the *prospect of ultimate reward*. Faith bows her head in the day of battle when the poisoned arrows fly like hail. She whispers to herself, “I may fall, but I shall rise again,” and she vows, by the eternal God, that when she rises it shall be with the same banner in her hand for which she fought. She knows that in the end she cannot, must not, fall—that she shall conquer. When a man fears defeat he will probably bring it upon himself, for his fear insures it; but when a man does not know how to be defeated, the little petty disasters of the way all contribute to his ultimate victory. So, Christians, you who are warring for God and His truth, I hope you will not despair because of the gloomy aspect of the present age. It may appear as if infidelity and Puseyism together would eat out the very heart of God’s church, but courage, my brothers and sisters, courage. These foes will eat up one another one of these days, or there shall rise a man out of their own ranks who will be their downfall; we may yet live to thank God for the apparent retrograde movements of today, for upon this the Lord may ride to a brighter ultimate triumph.

Faith is strong because she is sure of victory. Faith takes to herself this thought, that in the victory she shall share her reward. What will men not do for a crown? Even for an ivy crown the Grecian athlete would strain every nerve; now they did it for a corruptible crown, but we for an incorruptible. Faith makes the crown of eternal life glitter before the believer’s eyes; it waves before him the palm branch. Sense pictures the grave, loss, suffering, defeat, death, forgetfulness, but faith points to the resurrection, the pompous appearance of the Son of Man, the calling of the saints from every corner of the earth, the clothing of them all in their triumphant array, and the entrance of the blood-washed conquerors into the presence of God with eternal joy. Thus faith makes us, out of weakness, to become strong. Let me remind you that the essential ingredients of faith’s comfort are just these—faith sees the invisible, and beholds the substance of that which is afar off. Faith believes in God—a present, powerful God full of love and wisdom effecting His decrees, accomplishing His purposes, fulfilling His promises, glorifying His Son. Faith believes in the blood of Jesus, in the effectual redemption on the bloody tree; it believes

in the power of the Holy Spirit, His might to soften the stone, and to put life into the very ribs of death. Faith grasps the reality of this Book, she does not look upon it as a sepulcher with a stone laid on it, but as temple in which Christ reigns, as an ivory palace out of which He comes riding in His chariot, conquering and to conquer. Faith does not believe the gospel to be a worn-out scroll, to be rolled up and put away; she believes that the gospel, instead of being in its senility, is in its youth; she anticipates for it a manhood of mighty struggles, and a grand maturity of blessedness and triumph; faith does not shirk the fight, she longs for it because she foresees the victory. I would compare faith to an emperor of whom we have read that he summoned his counselors and generally judged as to whether he should go to war by their opinion, but he did it in the following manner—if they warned him that it would be a very fearful war, if they said that the enemy's cities would never be taken, that the armies on the other side were too numerous to be conquered, and the provinces too extensive to be held, he would reply, "We will do it then, for if there is anything which you, gentlemen, think to be easy, it is beneath the dignity of the emperor and the troops whom he commands, but if you reckon it impossible there is a clear field for honor." Was it not a man fit to be a soldier of such a prince, who when told that the Persian arrows were so numerous that they would obscure the light of the sun, replied, "We shall fight splendidly in the shade." Surely he was akin to Alexander, who, when they said that the Persians were as the sands on the seashore, replied, "One butcher is not afraid of a whole flock of sheep." So let it be with us; let us feel that we are men of another mold than to be afraid; let us feel that believing in God we do not know how to spell "coward," and as to fear of defeat or fear of man, we give that up for the craven dogs who slink at their master's heels, and wear their master's collar, and eat the garbage which his bounty throws to them. We care not for the things that are seen; we have learned to live upon angels' diets, and to eat the bread which comes down from heaven. Our motto is, "Courage! Courage!" And our belief is that the day shall come—

*"When the might with the right
And the right with the might
Forever more shall be,
And come what may
To stand in the way,
That day the world shall see."*

III. The third point is to ADMINISTER THIS MEDICINE, but no time remains, and besides I cannot do it; you must go to Him who compounded it, namely, the blessed Spirit of the living God, and take with you this prayer, "Lord, I believe, help my unbelief," and this other one, "Lord, increase our faith." But I will give you a few hints. Some of you are going through a present personal difficulty; you are embarrassed in money matters, or a child is sick, or the wife is dying, or some other providential trial is vexing you—you are saying, "I cannot bear it!" I will not pray with you that you may be comforted in that sinful weakness, but I will, and do beseech you to ask for faith in that Father's hand which wields the rod that you may get out of the weakness, and may now be made strong to suffer with holy patience what your loving Father's wisdom appoints for you. Others have a spiritual duty before you, but you are shirking it because of its difficulty. You do not like to "go through the ordeal"—that is what you call it. You are disobediently timid. Now, I shall not ask God to comfort you in that weakness—you know your Master's will, and you do it not; may you be beaten with many stripes, and may the stripes be blessed to you. I will ask that, knowing your duty, you may rise out of that weakness by believing that God will help you to obey, and so out of weakness you may be made strong. Some of you are called, where you live, to contend earnestly for God and for His truth. You have many adversaries, and your weakness makes you withhold your testimony; you have been trimming a good deal; you have been worshipping that modern Diana called Charity, which is the devil in the form of an angel of light, and instead of bringing out all the truth of God, you have given up the corners of it. I shall not ask that you may have any comfort in such weakness. May you be ashamed of having been ashamed of Christ and of His cross; but I do plead with God for you that believing the very sweepings of His truth to be precious, and the

very cuttings of the diamond of the gospel to be worth fighting for, you may escape from your weakness, and be made strong in life and death to boldly declare God's truth.

Some of you always doubt your Father's love, the faithfulness of Christ, and your own interest in Him. I will not comfort you in such a state; I will not pray God to comfort you while you are in it, but I do ask you to pray that you flee from such weakness. Do not doubt your God till you have cause to doubt Him. Oh, brothers and sisters, if you will never distrust the Lord Jesus till He gives you an occasion for distrust, and till there is something in His character which should rationally excite your suspicion, you will never disbelieve again! I pray you seek more faith, and you will rise out of your fears. You who are afraid of dying—and there are some such here—shall I ask that you may be made strong while in that weakness? No. I dare not. Jesus Christ did not come to give you comfort while you are under the fear of death; He came to deliver those who, through fear of death, are their entire lifetime subject to bondage. The plea shall be, therefore, that you may have such faith in God, and such a view of the Canaan on the other side of the flood, that you may look forward with delight, or at least with resignation, to the time when you shall pass the river and be forever with the Lord. The text says *out of weakness*, brothers and sisters, and oh, may God grant that some of you who have been lying spiritually on a sickbed may through this sermon be made to take up your bed and walk; may all weakness be left behind even as the child leaves the little garments of the nursery behind him when he becomes a man.

IV. My last work was to PRAISE THE PHYSICIAN, and who is this? Who is it that has taught us to believe? It is our Father who is in heaven, who has taught us and bids us trust Him—blessed be His name! Join with me—you need not sing with those lips—let your heart sing as you say, “Blessed be our heavenly Father who has given us precious faith in Him. Source of all goodness, foundation of all confidence, we adore You for teaching us the sweet art of trusting You!” Let us also, with equal thankfulness, bless the Lord Jesus, for we had never been capable of faith in the invisible God if there had not been a Mediator by whom we might come to Him. Blessed be those wounds and those agonies, and that death which is the door of our faith in the Father's love. Blessed, moreover, be that mysterious person, the Holy Spirit, for faith is His gift, and if it is to be increased in us, He must increase it. “O blessed Spirit, be You forever praised for putting such a jewel as faith into our poor hearts; and blessed be Your power for keeping it there, for Satan would long ago have stolen it; and blessed be Your Energy which shall keep it till I am beyond the reach of the foe.”

Brothers and sisters, do not let what I have said this morning merely pass your ears. I am persuaded that though I have not put it as I could wish, there is a great deal of practical value in the truths of God which I have stated. You must be strong. This is not an age in which weak Christianity will do. It is strong energetic religion that we need now, and you cannot obtain it except by gaining strong faith, and much of it. Plead for it, and then, when you shall have obtained it, the world shall feel your power, God shall be glorified, and Christ's name shall be lifted high.

You who have no faith at all may learn something here. It is only by faith that the impotence and inability of human nature is overcome, so that the soul receives Christ unto salvation. May the Holy Spirit work that faith in you to your eternal salvation, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—HEBREWS 11.

Adapted from *The C. H. Spurgeon Collection*, Version 1.0, Ages Software.

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